

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

ON THE WASATCH FRONT

ROOM 500 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84114

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PROVO CANYON

The Provo Canyon, Denver & Rio Grande Western freight line is a hotbed of contention right now. Thirty years ago passenger trains traveled a circuitous route from Provo to Heber and back again. Since then the line has been used exclusively for freight conveyance. Now, with the proposed abandonment of the D&RGW track in this area, two parties are vying for property rights there.

One party is the Utah State Highway Department. It has already secured a contract from D&RGW for right-of-way to build a four-lane highway over this 24-mile area. Cost of land, tracks, ties, etc., is \$264,000. The station grounds in Heber City will be retained by D&RGW. Abandonment is pending ICC approval.

The other party is the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation. They would like to put their Clover Valley Lumber Yard steam locomotive back to work again pulling a passenger train. Mr. J. R. Edwards, representative of this non-pro-

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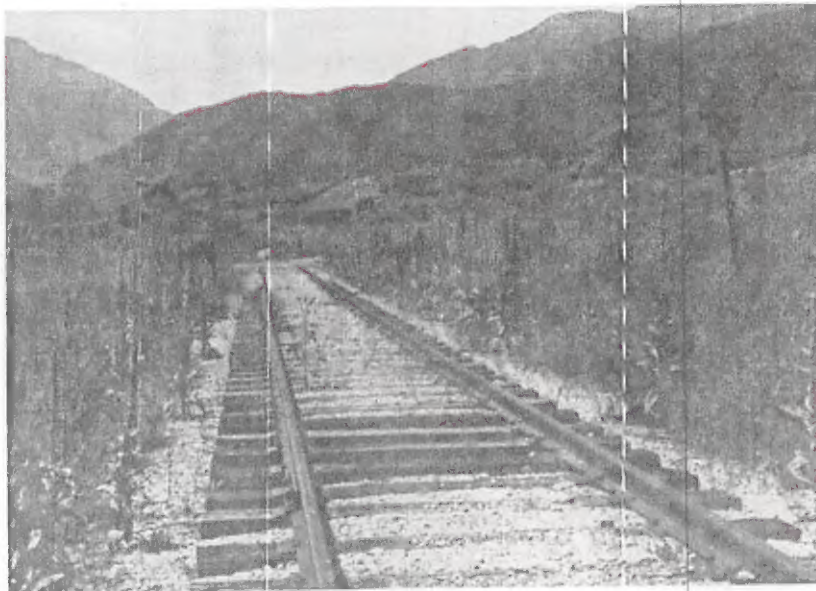


fit organization, feels the train could become a substantial money-making tourist attraction - - a \$1 million a year tourist attraction. The scenic route down Provo Canyon is precisely what interests him. His plan is to extend the former train route north of the Heber Station to include sight-seeing in the Wasatch Park area.

Conservationists, civic leaders and technicians have expressed concern over the issue too. Provo Canyon has a number of sizeable recreational areas that may be altered by inclusion of a four-lane highway or a tourist train. Rotary Club Park, Deer Creek Reservoir and Vivian Park for example provide access to fishing resources. Heber City officials are interested in obtaining right-of-way from Deer Creek to Heber City for construction of a high-voltage transmission line. And Mr. Bert L. Taylor, District

Six Preconstruction Engineer, in charge of the proposed Provo Canyon highway design is apprehensive about the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation project in general. He does not feel the train ride can consistently generate a \$1 million business. He says, "The canyon will be scarred more (with the WRM&F train) than if a road is built. Many local organizations are concerned with this aspect. Fishing areas will have to be eliminated. A four-lane highway will leave very little of the Provo River disturbed. Road access transportation is much more important than an entertainment train."

Public hearings have been planned to settle the controversy. The first was held August 15 in the Utah County Commission Chambers.



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